

Office of the Arizona State Fire Marshal



Fire Training Division Executive Summary

December 2008

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mission Statement

The primary mission of the Arizona State Fire Training Division is to provide equal, affordable access to high quality occupational education, training, and certification to all regions of the State of Arizona. It is the further mission of this division to provide the necessary research, evaluation, and recommendations for new products and procedures consistent with professional and nationally recognized standards.

Business History

The Fire Training Division (FTD) is one of two divisions under the authority of the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM). The OSFM is one of three offices within the Department of Fire, Building, and Life Safety. The FTD conducted the first state sponsored training program to the Phoenix Fire Department in May of 1973. Over the past 35 years, the FTD has grown to be the lead agency for state and nationally recognized fire service certification programs within the State of Arizona.

Key Management and Personnel Resources

The FTD has four full time employees assigned.

- State Fire Training Director (Currently Vacant)
- Fire Training Coordinator
- Administrative Assistant II
- Program/Projects Specialists

Customer Base

The FTD services the entire State of Arizona including all volunteer/paid professional and emergency service workers. Current records indicate 317 recognized fire departments and fire service personnel exceeding 10,000 members.

Committee Participation

The OSFM, Fire Training Division interacts and participates extensively in fire service committees throughout the State of Arizona. Fire Chiefs, Training Organizations, Fire Marshals, Community Colleges, Fire Districts, and Fire Departments rely heavily on communication and coordination provided by the FTD. The Fire Training Division functions as the central point of all communication and coordination of Fire Service Certification Training in the State of Arizona.

Services Provided

The FTD provides equal access to industry related training as required by state and federal enforceable standards and regulations. The FTD works closely with the (NFA) National Fire

Academy, (FEMA) Federal Emergency Management Agency and (DHS) Department of Homeland Security to maintain programs consistent with national security and preparedness goals. The FTD actively seeks, applies for, and administers federally funded grants to minimize state contributions necessary to fund fire service training. The FTD is the single authority for Accredited Fire Service Certification Programs in the State of Arizona utilizing (IFSAC) International Fire Service Accreditation Congress, a peer driven, self governing system that accredits both fire service certification programs and higher education fire-related degree programs.

Additionally, the OSFM sponsors the annual Arizona State Fire School. This event has been conducted for the past 35-years. Nearly 1000 students attend this event annually, which hosts approximately 30 different programs/workshops specifically targeted to the Arizona Fire Service. For many firefighters in Arizona, this is the only access they have to occupational related training. State Fire School is the most significant single service provided by the FTD requiring nearly 3-months of dedicated attention by all staff members.

Previous 180-Day Report and Accomplishments

In 2003, the OSFM was directed to discontinue conducting Outreach Workshops in the State of Arizona due to unresolved Instructor liability issues. The discontinuation of Outreach Training has had a dramatic affect on the Arizona Fire Service. Rural and volunteer fire departments of Arizona have been greatly deprived of basic and essential industry related training. Consequently, Arizona has not been able to adopt minimum standards for hiring or professional development due to the inability to provide reasonable access to required training.

In June of 2008, the OSFM established the following list of objectives to restore Outreach Training. As of December 2008, the following items have been accomplished:

- Develop, define, and implement a plan to restore State-wide Outreach Training. The state is now divided into 7 jurisdictional training regions. Instructors, training resources, training facilities, and training needs are currently being assessed.
- Develop, define, and implement a Certificate Fee Policy which generates self sustaining revenue to conduct Outreach Training. This policy establishes financial resources to restore Outreach Training to the State of Arizona independent of additional state funding. This process is now in effect with a projected revenue generation of \$50,000 in the first two quarters of 2009.
- Develop, define, and implement an Instructor Authorization Policy for all State Fire Service Instructors. Under the direction of the Arizona State Fire Chiefs, this policy creates a logistical database of qualified available instructors to conduct state sponsored Outreach Training. Instructors are cataloged by subject matter qualifications and geographical location. This will significantly reduce costs associated with Instructor travel, lodging, and per diem expenses while increasing the awareness and availability of subject matter expert instructors throughout the entire state.
- Expanding IFSAC Accreditation to Driver Operator Pumper Program. The FTD will soon have three programs featuring accreditation. This accreditation process adds the

greatest benefit to training programs through the portability and durability of nationally recognized certification standards.

- Develop, define, and implement a process for online testing. We are currently in the pilot phase of an online testing system designed to reduce costs and burden associated with our current paper based testing system. The potential cost savings of this process have not been fully determined but could result in several thousand dollars annually.
- Facilitate State-wide effort to establish a Fire Officer Certification program in the State of Arizona for Fire Officer I – IV. As of December 2008, Fire Officer I is nearly completed. Arizona will be one of only several states in the nation to have a model process in place for Fire Officer Certification Levels I-IV.
- Develop, define, and implement a process for regional testing. Regional testing is the concept of joining multiple testing events into a single combined event. Tests must be administered by a Proctor. This reduces the personnel costs of proctoring several exams into a single event. This process is now in effect posting a costs savings of approximately \$3000 in the fourth quarter of 2008.
- Applied and received the following grant awards totaling \$64,200 for 2009.
 - National Fire Academy State Training Grant \$28,000
 - Utilized to fund NFA sponsored courses
 - State Forester Volunteer Fire Assistant Grant \$20,000
 - Utilized to subsidize State Fire School
 - Training Resource and Data Exchange Grant \$16,000
 - Utilized to fund TRADE Region IX Training Programs

Current Status

Recent information from the Office of the State Fire Marshal indicates that the existing state sponsored fire training system is vulnerable due to fiscal instability and limited division staffing. The objectives accomplished in the previous 180-days should have a dramatic positive effect on the ability to deliver and sustain essential emergency response training throughout the state.

Projected 180-Day Goals and Forecast

- Continue implementation of State-wide Outreach Training. Use this process to complete the implementation of a State-wide Authorized Instructor database, thereby establishing a base of subject matter qualified Instructors strategically located throughout the State of Arizona.
- Seek and apply for available training grant funds to increase sustainability of Fire Service Training in the State of Arizona.
- Complete the implementation of online testing.
- Expand the utilization of regional testing procedures
- Explore the concept of private funding through donations for fire training. A close relationship exists between private industry and the need for emergency services. Many states have been successful in acquiring financial support from industry leaders

through corporate sponsorship. This concept provides potential to greatly offset the delivery costs of State-wide Outreach Training and the annual State Fire School.

- Complete accreditation for the Driver Operator (Aerial) Program and identify priorities for future accreditation submissions.
- Introduce new program offerings to include Fire Instructor III and Fire Inspector II as State Certification Programs.
- Complete and implement Level I and II of the Fire Officer Certification Model.

2009 Critical Objectives

- Restore funding for the State Fire Training Director position. Currently, the Training Coordinator is performing the duties of both positions with the assistance of division staff. The success of restoring Outreach Training relies directly on the timely delivery of policies and procedures to support this effort. Historical policies and procedures to facilitate Outreach Training have been misplaced due to technology updates. All supporting processes must be recreated. The benefit of restoring funding to this position will be recognized in all reaches of the Arizona State Fire Service.
- Continuation of existing funding levels is critical at this vulnerable time. Diminished local budgets and unemployment are having a severe impact on available funding for fire service personnel. Currently, the rural volunteer fire service of Arizona is completely dependent on the FTD to provide cost effective training to all regions of the state.

Summary

The Arizona State Fire Service relies exclusively on the OSFM Fire Training Division for vision, development, implementation, certification, and record management of all training certification. The current economy has severely compromised the ability of Fire Service Personnel and Fire Departments to conduct essential training without the assistance of the Fire Training Division. Most rural areas lack facilities, equipment, and resources to conduct essential training.

Through the past 180-days, the FTD has effectively restored the capability to provide critically needed fire service training throughout the State of Arizona. This success is directly proportional to the financial support provided through state funds. At this time it is critical to proceed and build on the successes of the past 180-days which greatly enhance the safety and preparedness of the Arizona State Fire Service. Our training goal is to provide state-wide all hazards preparedness in a fashion consistent with the nation's joint efforts of interoperability.